

OUR BOROUGH – a decade of investment

>Welcome to what I hope you will find a fascinating and insightful look at Kirklees and the ambitions we have for our future.

Like many councils, Kirklees have faced significant challenges over the past few years. We have seen this as an opportunity to put the voices of our citizens and diverse communities into everything we do; working with

them to develop and deliver the solutions that are best for them.

Taking this approach has provided us with the confidence to aim higher. We want to create the conditions for our local places to flourish. In 2020 we will focus on what our citizens care about – keeping our children safe to ensure they have the best start in life; a cleaner, greener environment; and investing in our places.

Together with our partners we will attract investment into Kirklees to realise our ambition of creating places where people care for each other and love where they live, work and play.

Our confidence is growing – take a look and see for yourselves what the future holds for Kirklees.

Jacqui Gedman
Chief executive of Kirklees Council





'We have a clear focus for the next 12 months; **investing in our places, serious action on climate change and the best start in life for children.**'

Our ambition

**Cllr Shabir Pandor,
leader of Kirklees Council**

Last year was a turning point, we set a budget which began the process to transform and invest in Kirklees.

This year we are building on those foundations and we have a clear focus for the next 12 months; investing in our places, serious action on climate change and the best start in life for children.

In terms of population, we're the largest borough in England that isn't a city, stretching over 408,000km² with a population of just under 440,000.

That's the beauty of Kirklees for me, our size gives us a unique mix of thriving town centres, picturesque countryside, iconic villages and the diversity of our communities and residents.

We want our 438,727 residents to have the best possible quality of life and that means busy town centres to be proud of, a clean and green borough and a place where all children and young people have the same opportunities in life to succeed.

Just like everywhere else, our high streets have felt the impact of the changes in how people shop. We need to think differently about redesigning our town centres to make them future-proof.

Cases of extreme weather such as heat waves and rainfall are having consequences already in Kirklees with issues such as moorland fires and flooding in particular affecting the region.

The time for action has to be now and as a society we all need to take responsibility. We've declared a climate emergency in Kirklees because we're passionate about this and take it incredibly seriously.

The future we want for Kirklees is one where every child is born with the same opportunities to succeed in life. That's why we're investing in our young people and making sure the help and support they need and deserve is of the very best standard.

We're an ambitious council with a clear focus and vision for our future and there's never been a more exciting time for our borough. The work we're doing is already beginning to change the lives of local people and there is much more to come.

Our job now is to build on this and to continue to work hard with our residents and partners to make Kirklees the very best place it can be.



Kirklees: a place th

Kirklees has an annual economy of £7bn and has recently been named as the second best place in the UK to set up and run a business. Kirklees Council and local businesses have been working together to make the borough a great place to do businesses for many years.

The latest figures available show that 1,960 new enterprises were set up in Kirklees in 2018 – the highest of any area in Yorkshire that is not a city. It's no surprise that more people are setting up shop in Kirklees – research by the Leeds City Region Enterprise Partnership (LEP) found it to be the second best place in the country to start and run a business.

The research created a UK-wide ranking system based on ten key factors for people setting up and running businesses. Only Leeds ranked higher than Kirklees.

Key factors that make Kirklees so desirable for business owners include the £70m invested in digital infrastructure in recent years as well as the average rent per square foot in the borough costing only £13.50.

Kirklees Council launched its ambitious £250m Huddersfield Blueprint regeneration vision in June 2019.

It focuses on regenerating six key areas of Huddersfield Town Centre: Station Gateway, St Peter's, Kingsgate and King Street, New Street, the Civic Quarter and a new Cultural Heart in the Queensgate and Piazza area.

Kirklees Council will launch its Dewsbury Blueprint on 5 February 2020. The plans for Dewsbury aim to make the town centre a place to live, with a strong retail offer, a revitalised market and more leisure opportunities.

The Cultural Heart and Town Park

Huddersfield's new vibrant Cultural Heart aims to be a catalyst for change in the town and is the most iconic vision within The Blueprint. It will be a place where families, visitors and residents can congregate and enjoy leisure, arts and music, where activities spill out into a high-quality public space. Crucially, this will bring new people into the town centre.

Key projects:

The Town Park – removal of the Piazza Shopping Centre to create a large, family-friendly open space.

The Cultural Heart – a library, art gallery, museum & live music venue, supported by restaurants, bars, cafes and the Lawrence Batley Theatre.



St Peter's: The Creative Area

The area is already a favourite of creatives and is home to an interesting and unique set of independent businesses, restaurants, shops, bars and coffee shops as well as the popular Open Market.

We want to build on this by promoting modern co-working spaces and studios within some of our historic buildings.

Key projects:

Post Office building – transforming the building for town centre living.

Open Market refurbishment – bringing Huddersfield's two markets together in one venue and introducing restaurants and cafes and an evening offer.

Station Gateway

Huddersfield Railway Station is already a striking arrival place for visitors.

However, the future Trans-Pennine Route rail upgrade, including a new platform, provides an opportunity to look at improving facilities in the station and to enhance the whole area for visitors and local people.

Key projects:

Enhancing the train station – good quality waiting areas and a choice of eating, drinking and convenience shopping.

New Station Square – an arrival space, drop off zone and new entrance to Huddersfield.





'We're laying the foundations for business and people to thrive, and it's never been a more exciting time to live, work and invest in Kirklees.'



The Huddersfield Blueprint will see Kirklees' largest town transformed over the coming years

'I've had the chance to see what Huddersfield has put together as a blueprint for the next ten years. In anything I've seen over the course of this year, this is up there in the top echelon.'

Bill Grimsey
Retail expert and the former chief executive of Iceland and Wickes

Investing in our places

Cllr Peter McBride, deputy leader of Kirklees Council and cabinet member for regeneration

Our towns, villages and communities are the strength of Kirklees. We know that the unique local identity of our places really matters to local people.

People in each of our distinct local places know their own strengths. Local people are best placed to understand local challenges, and to have ideas about how to improve things. Yet we know that people can't always achieve this change alone.

We're developing a new, place-based way of working. The aim is to put communities and their councillors at the heart of what happens in our local places. This includes local people being involved in how council services are designed and delivered, in different parts of Kirklees.

Working together to improve our diverse places, and bringing services closer to people, is a priority for the council and for our partners.

Town centres will always be an important part of our communities. There's no denying that online shopping has changed the way the retail industry works and that's evident in high streets across the country today with empty shops more and more visible. We can no longer rely on retail alone to get visitors into the town centre.

In Kirklees we're creating family-friendly town centres that attract people in from far and wide. That's why a big focus of our regeneration plans is to bring more experiences and culture to our town centres. Live music, art galleries, libraries, museums, cinemas - these are all experiences people can't access online or at home and the increased footfall through this will support our existing town centre businesses and will see new ones - such as restaurants, bars and cafes - open as a result.

Town centres need to be welcoming and we need people to know that we want them to spend time here. We're looking at how access can be made easier for visitors, particularly for pedestrians and cyclists, with redesigned streets that are greener and easier on the eye and link all attractions together.

Crucially, high-quality open public spaces will transform town centres across Kirklees.

We're laying the foundations for business and people to thrive and it's never been a more exciting time to live, work and invest in Kirklees.



Kingsgate and King Street: A traditional town centre offer

Kingsgate provides the more traditional retail experience within Huddersfield town centre and we want to protect and support this.

Key projects:

Kingsgate cinema - a new cinema and leisure complex is set to be introduced to the Kingsgate Shopping Centre.

Pedestrian-friendly town centre: Enhancing the streets surrounding Kingsgate Shopping Centre for pedestrians and cyclists.



New Street: A modern high street

New Street is split into two distinct halves: New Street North and New Street South and is Huddersfield's main retail area. The plans aim to improve New Street for shoppers, whilst also introducing town centre living.

Key projects:

New Street - enhancing the public area with garden streets where people can relax and events can take place.

Cooperative Building - converting the long-disused building into 75 student apartments.



The Civic Quarter: Local lives

The Civic Quarter area captures the site of current Civic Centre buildings, the magistrates' court, police station, and the bus station. Enhancements to the public realm will improve access for people using services.

Key projects:

Improving the bus station - enhancing the look of the building and introducing a food and drink offer as well as pop-up shops.

Connecting the train and bus stations - making the route between the two stations more accessible and appealing to pedestrians.

Responding to a climate emergency

Kirklees Council has a new ambitious plan to make the borough completely carbon neutral by 2038. Cabinet members backed the Kirklees Climate Emergency action plan on 12 November 2019 and called for even more investment to increase the number of electric vehicles in the borough.

The plan will now include proposals to significantly boost the number of electric vehicles in the council's fleet and for more public charging points to be installed across the borough to support residents and visitors to move towards electric vehicles.

To support this further, parking will also

From electric vehicles to a green charter, Kirklees is tackling climate change head on

To support this further, parking will also be free for hybrid and electric vehicles across Kirklees

be free for hybrid and electric vehicles across Kirklees in a bid to encourage more people to drive them.

This comes after the council passed a motion declaring a district-wide climate emergency in January 2019 and established the Climate Emergency Working Party (CEWP) to identify actions to reduce emissions in Kirklees.

On 12 November the council's cabinet was presented with the CEWP's action plan which sets out an ambition for Kirklees to become a carbon neutral district by at least 2038 – the deadline set by the West Yorkshire Combined Authority.

This will mean environmental impact will

be considered as part of any decision made by the authority. Some other key actions to help Kirklees reach this target include; boosting local woodland through the White Rose Forest Partnership, establishing a Kirklees Climate Commission and Kirklees Green Charter and to hold a Kirklees Youth Summit on climate change.

The council will also continue its measures to significantly improve recycling rates in advance of a full review of the waste collection and disposal service. This all forms phase one of the council's Climate Emergency Action Plan, phase two will set out how Kirklees will become carbon neutral by 2038 and will be released next year.

Climate change: KEY ACTIONS

Kirklees could soon have one of the best electric vehicle charging networks in the country. A £1m council investment is set to put Kirklees at the forefront of electric vehicle infrastructure provision. It will see five new rapid charge points and 80-100 new fast charge points installed in public car parks and on-street to support residents and visitors to move towards electric vehicles.

This will add to Kirklees' current network which has three rapid chargers and 22 slow to fast chargers in the public domain, with a further 17 rapid chargers being installed in public locations by October 2021.

Council electric vehicles

Kirklees Council plans to invest a further £1m to add 50 new electric vehicles to its fleet. This would add to the five small electric vans, 20 electric and 30 hybrid pool cars the council currently has in its fleet and the 24 small electric vans which are already in the process of being procured.

A carbon budget

Using independent analysis to set a 'carbon-budget' for Kirklees to achieve our net zero ambition. We will also publicly disclose our carbon emissions.

Environmental impact considered

Before any Kirklees Council decision is made, the environmental impact will be assessed and considered.

Planting and saving trees

Kirklees Council will increase trees and woodland in both rural and urban parts of the district. This will be done by replacing trees projected to be lost through disease and by taking every opportunity to plant new ones across Kirklees and as part of the White Rose Forest initiative.

Recycle more

Kirklees Council will continue its measures to significantly improve

recycling rates and will carry out a full review of its waste collection and disposal service to support this.

Create a Kirklees Climate Commission and Kirklees Green Charter

Kirklees Council is forming a Climate Commission, made up of partners and organisations across the district working together to drive change.

A Kirklees Green Charter is also being developed which local people and organisations will be encouraged to sign up to and make environmental pledges.

Giving young people a voice

In 2020 Kirklees Council is inviting every young person and child across the whole borough to help shape the positive work being done to tackle climate change locally.

A Climate Change Youth Summit will be held in the spring of 2020 to make sure the passionate voices of young people are heard.





Tackling air quality

Kirklees Council has produced an innovative plan to reduce air pollution across the borough – supporting its ambitious vision to tackle climate change.

On 12 November 2019 cabinet approved an action plan which outlines what will be done to improve air quality in Kirklees up to March 2024.

Air pollution is associated with a number of serious health impacts – it is recognised as a contributing factor in the onset of heart disease and cancer. It particularly affects the most vulnerable in society such as children and older people, and those with heart and lung conditions.

The Kirklees Air Quality Action Plan aims to address this. The new plan will see Kirklees install up to 17 rapid electric vehicle charge points as part of a larger West Yorkshire project.

Kirklees will also continue its planning policy which requires all new build homes to have electric vehicle charge points installed. This will soon be a national requirement but Kirklees was one of the first councils in the country to introduce it.

New air quality monitoring equipment will be used outside schools to gather evidence of the harmful effects waiting vehicles can have. The council will work with and listen to young people to understand their views on how to prevent air pollution and the climate emergency. They will also be supported to travel to school in the most sustainable and suitable way possible for them. Resources will be created for schools to tackle this problem and the council will take advantage of any change in the law to use enforcement powers to address it.

The council will be working with the University of Huddersfield, companies based in the 3M Buckley Building and traffic management infrastructure suppliers to develop innovative traffic management technologies. This will improve congestion and air quality across Kirklees.

Cllr Naheed Mather, cabinet member for Greener Kirklees, says: 'Clean air is one of the most basic requirements of a healthy environment. We have made great improvements in recent years in

tackling air pollution in Kirklees but there is much more that we need to do – as a council, with our partners and as individuals. This strategy sets out how we can do this together.

'It is our vision to ensure that children have the best start in life and that our residents are as well as possible for as long as possible. Crucial to this is creating a clean and green environment.'

Cllr Naheed Mather, cabinet member for Greener Kirklees



Climate change is already happening and action to address it is now an emergency. Cases of extreme weather such as heat waves and rainfall are having consequences already in Kirklees with issues such as moorland fires and flooding in particular affecting the region.

It's not too late to prevent some of the very worst effects of climate change but we must act now and that's why we put actions in phase one of our plan which will make a significant and immediate impact.

We will then work on delivering phase two of our plan which will set out our long-term strategy to make Kirklees a carbon-neutral district by at least 2038.

This plan gives us the platform we need to build on but in order for us to make real change and for Kirklees to become carbon neutral, we all have a role to play. We can only do this with everyone on-board so I urge people to read our plan and think about what you can do to improve our climate.





INVESTING in the future

Cllr Viv Kendrick, cabinet member for children

We're committed to delivering high quality services to all children, in particular those who are vulnerable and therefore rely on others to improve their outcomes.

We will be prioritising our investments to make the biggest difference to children living in poverty, providing additional support that

will close the gap between them and their peers.

We will also invest in early intervention services, which make the biggest difference to families, schools and communities and help children to learn, be healthy and safe.

Ultimately, our aim is to make Kirklees a place that gives every young person, no matter what their background is, the same opportunities to fulfil their potential and succeed in life.

Extra resources are going into children's services to ensure youngsters across Kirklees get the best start in life



Sanna's story

A Kirklees Council employee and care leaver has graduated from Huddersfield University with a first class honours degree – and now she wants her story to inspire others.

Sanna Mahmood, 25, from Huddersfield entered the care system aged just 14 following the breakdown of her home life.

She was placed in foster care and credits her foster parents for their unconditional support and encouragement, showing a path that previously had not been available to her.

Sanna started her career as an apprentice in children and young people services and completed a one-year work placement in various council departments. This enabled her to apply for a degree in health and community development with the hope of working in human resources.

At the same time, Sanna continued



'I fully embraced being in care because the people that were looking after me were so encouraging, supportive and inspiring'

supporting vulnerable young people by volunteering with the council's children in care team – a forum for fostered children to share their experiences, discuss any issues and ask for additional help.

A key supporter of Sanna and her journey has been the council's very own chief executive, Jacqui Gedman, whom she met during her first year in university. Sanna describes the moment as 'one of the most life-changing things ever to happen to me'. The first meeting took place during Care Leavers' Week at the Achieve Awards, which celebrate the achievements of care leavers in Kirklees.

Sanna said: 'I fully embraced being in care because the people that were looking after me were so encouraging, supporting and inspiring; they really helped to build my confidence.'

'I chose to go to Huddersfield University because of the wealth of resources that are

available for care leavers in Kirklees.

'Being in care we often meet our corporate parents, such as councillors, MPs and council directors, but Jacqui was so different. She brought a new energy and showed me what a hard-working, professional woman in leadership looked like.

'She offered me a chance of a lifetime as a care leavers advocate, not only to shadow her personally but to re-launch the Children in Care Council, Care Leavers' Forum and run various projects. I can't thank her enough for her support and encouragement. I know I'm very lucky.'

Sanna also works at the No 11 drop-in centre, which was developed by the council as a place where children in care and care leavers can receive help and advice. The centre has been praised by central government as an innovative way of giving young people extra support.



Making progress

Mel Meggs, director for children's services

Our investment in children's services across Kirklees has continued over the last year and looking forward remains a huge priority.

We've faced our challenges and have learnt from them. We're now on a journey of improvement and we're already making huge strides forward to make sure all of our children and young people have the support and opportunities they deserve in life.

I came in as director of children's services in December 2018. Since then, we've focussed on delivering clear improvements, both in practice and in outcomes over the last year and this was recognised in the inspection of local authority children's services in June 2019.

As a result, our children's services are no longer 'inadequate' but 'require improvement to be good'. This is better but, to be completely frank, it still isn't good enough for our children. We will not be happy with anything other than 'outstanding' services by the time of the next full inspection.

Our recent Local Government Association corporate peer challenge noted: 'The council has and continues to respond positively to the recommendations of the children's services inspection.'

'The process of recovery created an environment of cross-departmental working which has reaped benefits for the organisation.'

At the heart of our ambitious improvement journey is a focus on knowing more ourselves and our services.

The questions we always must ask is 'what is the data telling us?'

We can't get this right alone. We're embracing feedback from staff, research, the voices of local children and our partners.

We've made fantastic improvements to our safeguarding system. Good practice and decision-making has been maintained along with stronger services to support this and innovative new approaches.

The number of external social care residential placements outside Kirklees continues to be reduced. External residential placements now are under 30 and are projected to be below 20 by April 2021.

We've also worked hard to maintain stability within our workforce, which has been reinforced with a strong learning and development programme focusing on developing confident and enthusiastic practitioners.

This was highlighted by the Ofsted inspection. The fall in agency social workers has been maintained and our ambition is to reduce this to zero by April 2020.

A further acknowledgement of the improvements we've made is that the Department for Education has revoked the statutory direction notice and has replaced it with an improvement notice.

Our improvement journey still has a long way to go, but we're already making significant and life-changing progress.

We will continue with this good work until our services are 'outstanding' so our children get the very best start in life. We owe this to them.



Youth offending team making a difference

Kirklees Council's Youth Offending Team was praised at national level after demonstrating high-quality restorative justice and making a real difference in the lives of offenders and victims. Restorative justice is an approach which brings people into communication after they have been affected by crime. The victim and the offender are able to share their experience of what happened, to discuss who was harmed by the crime and to agree on how the offender can repair it.

In October 2019, the council was awarded the Restorative Service Quality Mark (RSQM) by the Restorative Justice Council to recognise the high standard of work it carries out with victims, young people and the community in addressing youth crime.

Stephen's story

Stephen was a vulnerable young man who described himself as having learning difficulties and anxiety. He was assaulted by a group of three young people, leaving him fearful and unable to leave his home.

Stephen told the Kirklees Youth Offending Team how the offence had made him feel and that he no longer had the independence he had previously enjoyed. He was afraid and isolated.

Over time, Stephen realised he wanted to ask more questions and get involved in a restorative process. He wanted reassurance that there wouldn't be any retribution if he were to see the young people who had assaulted him.

One of the young people volunteered to meet with Stephen. He was able to tell the young person how the assault had affected him and how he feared going out alone.

The young person apologised for his part in the incident and told Stephen that he regretted it.

Stephen explains: 'I wanted to do this because I felt scared and had lost all my confidence. I felt nervous beforehand but I was able to tell him how I felt and he told me how he felt. The meeting was really good and I feel that I have had some closure. It didn't take long, but those 10 minutes changed my life.'

'My support worker said he thought I was more confident. I have started going out a bit on my own. I am currently getting ready to move into my own home and I'm looking forward to the arrival of a niece or nephew at the end of the year. I feel really proud that I did this, it really helped me.'

AN INNOVATIVE WAY TO SUPPORT CARE LEAVERS

Number 12, in the centre of Dewsbury, is Kirklees' second facility for people who are leaving care and preparing for the next stage in their lives.

When Kirklees Council opened the first centre – Number 11 in Huddersfield – it won praise from central government and was hailed as an innovative way of supporting looked after children and care leavers.

Number 12 offers similar help in providing a safe space where there is advice and guidance about healthy lifestyles, housing and finance, life skills, training, education and employment, amongst many others.

It's also a place for young people to meet their social workers and contains handy facilities, from laundry to computer equipment and a kitchen where they can learn to cook.

Achieving the ambition

Jacqui Gedman, chief executive of Kirklees Council

I hope you have enjoyed this view of Kirklees both as a council and as a place and I hope you are as inspired by it as I am.

Above all, Kirklees is a place of huge potential. We will realise that potential by putting citizens' priorities at the heart of our ambitions

'Kirklees is a great place to work, live and visit'



and recognising the importance of building on their pride and sense of identity within their towns and villages. Our people are our collective strength and one we fully appreciate. We will achieve our ambitions by putting citizens in the driving seat. We are building a new relationship with our communities and we will work with our partners to excel in this.

Kirklees' greatest asset is our passion – both

in the council and in our communities – to make the difference.

Our confidence in our collective abilities to do this and to meet the challenges ahead will drive us forward. Everyone in Kirklees cares about working together to deliver what matters to local people and with that confidence we can only succeed. We have much to do, but we will achieve it together.

A SNAPSHOT OF KIRKLEES

- Set in the heart of West Yorkshire
- Third largest metropolitan district in the UK
- Two major centres: Huddersfield and Dewsbury
- Located in the centre of Leeds, Manchester and Sheffield city regions
- Easy access to the North's major cities, airports and ports
- Population of 437,000
- 175,686 households
- Annual economy of £7bn
- A rich cultural heritage and diverse population
- Birthplace of famous artists, authors, musicians and actors

